

A STUDY ON MENTAL HEALTH AND INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIP AMONG UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS

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Abstract

The college years represent a critical developmental period characterized by increased academic pressure, social adjustment, and identity formation. This study explores the relationship between mental health and interpersonal relationships among college students. Using quantitative and qualitative data, the research investigates how the quality of students' relationships with peers, family, and faculty influences their psychological well-being. Findings indicate a significant positive correlation between healthy interpersonal relationships and better mental health outcomes, underscoring the importance of social connectedness in promoting emotional resilience among college students.

Keywords: Mental health, academic pressure and Interpersonal relationship

Introduction

College life presents a complex blend of academic challenges, personal growth, and social interactions. While this stage fosters independence and self-discovery, it also exposes students to stress, anxiety, and emotional difficulties. Mental health issues such as depression, loneliness, and social anxiety have been increasingly prevalent in higher education settings.

Interpersonal relationships connections with friends, family, teachers, and romantic partners play a crucial role in shaping students' emotional experiences. This study seeks to examine how the quality and nature of these relationships relate to students' mental health, and how supportive networks can serve as protective factors against psychological distress.

Review of Literature

Li, R. (2025) did a study on the systematic review on the impact of social support on university students' mental health and well-being outcomes. The review analyzed 51 studies (2010–2024) on how social support affects students' mental health and well-being. Findings showed that strong social support directly reduces stress, anxiety, and depression while improving emotional health. Indirectly, it enhances resilience, self-esteem, and life satisfaction. The study concludes that nurturing supportive peer and family relationships is vital for promoting mental health among university students.

Grosicki, et al. (2025) conducted a study on Wearing WHOOP More Frequently Is Associated with Better Biometrics and Healthier Sleep and Activity Patterns. Wearable devices are increasingly used for health monitoring, yet the impact of consistent wear is unclear. Using longitudinal data from 11,914 WHOOP users, the study found that higher wear frequency over 12 weeks was linked to lower resting heart rate (RHR), higher heart rate variability (HRV), longer and more regular sleep, and more physical activity. Increased sleep duration partially mediated the association between wear frequency and reduced RHR, though physical activity did not. A Granger causality analysis showed a modest predictive

relationship between earlier wear frequency and future RHR for participants averaging ≤ 5 days/week. The findings suggest that sustained use of wearables may support healthier physiological and behavioral outcomes.

Zhou (2025) conducted a study on Social anxiety and smartphone addiction among college students: associations and implications. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*. Advance online publication. This study examined the link between social anxiety and smartphone addiction among 2,316 college students using a cross-sectional survey. Results showed that higher social anxiety strongly predicted smartphone addiction, particularly in areas of compulsive use and withdrawal symptoms. Loneliness and poor self-control mediated this relationship. Gender differences were minimal, though females reported slightly higher social anxiety. The authors conclude that interventions focusing on emotional regulation and social connectedness can effectively reduce smartphone dependence.

Chen, et al. (2025) conducted a study on Loneliness, smartphone addiction, and social anxiety: longitudinal links among college students. This longitudinal study followed 3,766 college students over two years to examine how loneliness predicts social anxiety, and whether smartphone addiction mediates this relationship. Initial levels and changes in loneliness were significantly associated with initial levels and changes in social anxiety. Smartphone addiction mediated both the intercept (indirect effect = 0.12, $p < 0.001$) and slope (indirect effect = 0.26, $p < 0.001$) of this relationship, especially for male students. For female students the mediation effect was significant only at the intercept (initial level) and not the slope. These findings highlight the importance of addressing smartphone addiction arising from loneliness to prevent rising social anxiety among college students.

Significance of the study

The present study on the mental health and interpersonal relationship among college students holds great academic and social relevance. College life is a critical transitional period marked by emotional, social, and academic challenges that can greatly influence students' mental well-being. Understanding how interpersonal relationships—such as friendships, peer interactions, and social support affect mental health provides valuable insights for promoting holistic student development. This study will help educators, counsellors, and administrators design effective guidance and mentoring programs that strengthen students' emotional and social competencies. It also contributes to psychological research by providing empirical evidence on how positive interpersonal relationships serve as protective factors against stress, anxiety, and depression. Furthermore, the findings can inform college policies and wellness initiatives aimed at creating a more supportive and mentally healthy campus environment. In essence, this study bridges the gap between mental health awareness and social connectedness, emphasizing that healthy relationships are foundational for students' psychological well-being, academic success, and overall personal growth.

Objectives

- ❖ To find out the significant difference between mental health and interpersonal relationship among undergraduate students with respect to gender.
- ❖ To find out the significant difference between mental health and interpersonal relationship among undergraduate students with respect to locality of the student.
- ❖ To find out the significant difference between mental health and interpersonal relationship among undergraduate students with respect to type of family.

Hypotheses

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- ❖ There is no significant difference between mental health and interpersonal relationship among undergraduate students with respect to gender.
- ❖ There is no significant difference between mental health and interpersonal relationship among undergraduate students with respect to locality of the student.
- ❖ There is no significant difference between mental health and interpersonal relationship among undergraduate students with respect to type of family.

Method:

Descriptive survey research method has been used in the present study.

Sample:

The sample for the investigation was drawn from the undergraduate students located in Villupuram district of Tamil Nadu state by using simple random sampling technique. It comprises 200 undergraduate students.

Tools used:

- ❖ Mental Health Inventory- Srivastava and Jagdish (2003). Mental health inventory was used to assess the mental health of college students. Reliability of the tool is 0.75.
- ❖ Interpersonal Relationship Inventory prepared and standardised by the researcher with the help of the guide.(2025) was used in the present study. Reliability of the tool is 0.876.

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Hypotheses

- ❖ There is no significant difference between mental health and interpersonal relationship among college students with respect to gender.
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- ❖ There is no significant difference between mental health and interpersonal relationship among college students with respect to type of family.

Hypothesis 1

There is no significant difference between Interpersonal Relationship among undergraduate students with respect to gender.

Table: 1

Mean and Standard Deviation and 't' value on Interpersonal Relationship among undergraduate students based on gender.

Interpersonal Relationship	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t value	Result
	Male	92	102.15	3.152		
	Female	108	101.55	2.872	.160	NS

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The table shows that male students (N=92, M=102.15, SD=3.152) and female students (N=108, M=101.55, SD=2.872) have almost similar mean scores in interpersonal relationship.

The obtained t -value (.160) is not statistically significant. This indicates there is no significant difference between male and female students in their interpersonal relationships. Both genders demonstrate comparable levels of interpersonal relationship skills. Hence, gender does not influence the interpersonal relationship among undergraduate students.

Hypothesis 2

There is no significant difference between interpersonal relationship among college students with respect to Locality of the student.

Table: 2

Mean and Standard Deviation and 't' value on interpersonal relationship among undergraduate students based on Locality of the student.

Interpersonal Relationship	Locality of the student	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t value	Result
	Rural	96	102.08	2.886	.243	NS
	Urban	104	101.59	3.118		

There is no significant difference between interpersonal relationships among undergraduate students with respect to type of family. The table shows that rural students (N=96, M=102.08, SD=2.886) and urban students (N=104, M=101.59, SD=3.118) have nearly similar mean scores in interpersonal relationship. The obtained t -value (.243) is not statistically significant. This indicates that locality does not significantly affect the interpersonal relationship among students. Both rural and urban students exhibit comparable levels of interpersonal relationship skills. Hence, the locality of the student has no significant influence on interpersonal relationship among undergraduate students.

Hypothesis 3

There is no significant difference between interpersonal relationships among undergraduate students with respect to type of family.

Table: 3

Mean and Standard Deviation and 't' value on interpersonal relationships among undergraduate students based on type of family.

Interpersonal Relationship	Type of family	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t value	Result
	Joint family	90	101.73	2.751	.694	NS
	Nuclear family	110	101.90	3.220		

The table shows that students from joint families (N=90, M=101.73, SD=2.751) and nuclear families (N=110, M=101.90, SD=3.220) have almost identical mean scores in interpersonal relationship. The obtained t -value (.694) is not statistically significant. This indicates that family type does not have a significant effect on interpersonal relationship among students.

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Both joint and nuclear family students exhibit similar levels of interpersonal relationship. Hence, the type of family does not influence the interpersonal relationship among undergraduate students.

Hypothesis 4

There is no significant difference between mental health among undergraduate students with respect to gender.

Table: 4

Mean and Standard Deviation and 't' value on mental health among undergraduate students based on gender.

Mental Health	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t value	Result
	Male	92	165.67	4.292	.415	NS
	Female	108	166.17	4.213		

The table shows that male students (N=92, M=165.67, SD=4.292) and female students (N=108, M=166.17, SD=4.213) have nearly equal mean scores in mental health. The obtained *t*-value (.415) is not statistically significant. This indicates there is no significant difference between male and female students in their mental health status. Both genders display a similar level of mental health and well-being. Hence, gender does not significantly influence the mental health of undergraduate students.

Hypothesis 5

There is no significant difference between mental health among undergraduate students with respect to Locality of the student.

Table: 5

Mean and Standard Deviation and 't' value on mental health among undergraduate students based on Locality of the student

Mental Health	Locality of the student	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t value	Result
	Rural	96	165.76	4.101	.566	NS
	Urban	104	166.11	4.389		

The data indicate that rural students (N=96, M=165.76, SD=4.101) and urban students (N=104, M=166.11, SD=4.389) have almost identical mean scores in mental health. The calculated *t*-value (.566) is not statistically significant, showing no meaningful difference between the two groups. This suggests that the locality of students does not play a major role in determining their mental health levels. Both rural and urban students display comparable mental health and psychological well-being. Therefore, it can be concluded that locality has no significant impact on the mental health of undergraduate students.

Hypothesis 6

There is no significant difference between mental health among undergraduate students with respect to Type of family.

Table: 6

Mean and Standard Deviation and 't' value on mental health among undergraduate students based on Type of family.

Mental Health	Type of family	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t value	Result
	Joint family	90	165.81	4.484	.702	NS
	Nuclear family	110	166.05	4.058		

The table shows that students from joint families (N=90, M=165.81, SD=4.484) and nuclear families (N=110, M=166.05, SD=4.058) have almost similar mean scores in mental health. The obtained *t*-value (.702) is not statistically significant. This indicates that the type of family does not significantly affect the mental health of students. Both joint and nuclear family students exhibit comparable levels of mental health and well-being. Hence, family type has no significant influence on the mental health of undergraduate students.

Major findings of the study

- ❖ It was found that there is no significant difference between male and female students in their interpersonal relationships. Both genders demonstrate comparable levels of interpersonal relationship skills. Hence, gender does not influence the interpersonal relationship among undergraduate students
- ❖ It was found that locality does not significantly affect the interpersonal relationship among students. Both rural and urban students exhibit comparable levels of interpersonal relationship skills. Hence, the locality of the student has no significant influence on interpersonal relationship among undergraduate students.
- ❖ It was found that family type does not have a significant effect on interpersonal relationship among students. Both joint and nuclear family students exhibit similar levels of interpersonal relationship. Hence, the type of family does not influence the interpersonal relationship among undergraduate students.
- ❖ It was found that there is no significant difference between male and female students in their mental health status. Both genders display a similar level of mental health and well-being. Hence, gender does not significantly influence the mental health of undergraduate students.
- ❖ It was found that the locality of students does not play a major role in determining their mental health levels. Both rural and urban students display comparable mental health and psychological well-being. Therefore, it can be concluded that locality has no significant impact on the mental health of undergraduate students.
- ❖ It was found that the type of family does not significantly affect the mental health of students. Both joint and nuclear family students exhibit comparable levels of mental health and well-being. Hence, family type has no significant influence on the mental health of undergraduate students.

Suggestions for further research

- ❖ Future studies can explore the longitudinal impact of interpersonal relationships on mental health across different academic years.
- ❖ Comparative studies between undergraduate and postgraduate students can provide deeper insights into developmental differences.
- ❖ Further research may examine the influence of gender, socioeconomic status, and cultural background on mental health and relationships.

- ❖ Qualitative studies using interviews or focus groups can help understand students' personal experiences in depth.
- ❖ Investigating the role of digital communication and social media in shaping interpersonal relationships is recommended.

Educational implications

- ❖ Institutions should integrate mental health awareness programs into the curriculum to promote emotional well-being among students.
- ❖ Guidance and counselling services must be strengthened to help students manage stress and interpersonal conflicts effectively.
- ❖ Teachers should be trained to identify early signs of psychological distress and provide appropriate support or referrals.
- ❖ Peer mentoring programs can be introduced to foster positive interpersonal relationships and mutual support networks.
- ❖ Classroom activities promoting empathy, cooperation, and teamwork can enhance students' social and emotional competence.

Conclusion

The study concludes that mental health and interpersonal relationships among undergraduate students are deeply interrelated. Positive, supportive social interactions contribute significantly to emotional stability and academic success. Conversely, poor relationships can exacerbate psychological distress. Building and maintaining healthy interpersonal connections should thus be an integral component of campus mental health initiatives.

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